

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions.

Claims 1-46. (Cancelled)

47. (New) A retractable ramp system comprising:
a frame including longitudinal guide members;
a carriage extending laterally between and longitudinally moveable along the guide members;
a ramp pivotally coupled to the carriage and movable between stowed and deployed positions;
a motor coupled to the frame;
a drive assembly coupled to the motor and including a drive pulley, a drive member driven by the drive pulley and coupled to the carriage, and a release assembly for engaging and disengaging the drive pulley and the motor, the motor operable to move the ramp between the stowed and deployed positions when engaged with the drive pulley;
a manual control assembly including a bearing block moveable under manual control along one of the guide members to deploy the ramp when the motor and the drive pulley are disengaged.
48. (New) The retractable ramp system of claim 47, wherein the carriage includes bearing members movable along the guide members, and wherein the bearing block engages one of the bearing members to urge the carriage along the guide members during manual movement of the ramp toward the deployed position.
49. (New) The retractable ramp system of claim 47, wherein the manual control assembly includes a manual crank assembly including a handle, a pulley, and a cable coupled to the pulley and the bearing block, and wherein rotation of the handle winds the cable upon the pulley to pull the bearing block along the one of the guide members to deploy the ramp.

50. (New) The retractable ramp system of claim 47, wherein the motor includes a drive shaft defining an axis, and wherein the drive pulley freely rotates upon the drive shaft when the release assembly disengages the drive pulley from the motor.

51. (New) The retractable ramp system of claim 50, wherein the drive pulley defines a plurality of axially-extending openings, the release assembly including:

- a first collar axially slidable along the drive shaft and including a pair of axially-extending pins, the pins selectively received by at least some of the plurality of openings in the drive pulley to rotatably couple the drive pulley to the drive shaft; and

- a second collar coupled to the drive shaft for rotation therewith between the first collar and the drive pulley, the second collar defining openings through which the pins extend.

52. (New) The retractable ramp system of claim 51, the release assembly further including:

- a stop collar coupled to an end of the drive shaft;

- a biasing member positioned between the stop collar and the second collar and biasing the second collar toward the drive pulley to thereby bias the pins into engagement with the at least some of the plurality of openings in the drive pulley.

53. (New) The retractable ramp system of claim 52, wherein the first collar defines a groove, the release assembly further including:

- a release actuator including at least one pin received by the groove; and

- a release cable coupled to the release actuator and manually operable to overcome the biasing member and move the release actuator pin and, thereby, the first collar, axially away from the drive pulley to disengage the drive pulley from the drive shaft.

54. (New) The retractable ramp system of claim 47, wherein the bearing block remains substantially stationary relative to the guide member during movement of the ramp toward the deployed position by the motor when the motor is engaged with the drive pulley.

55. (New) A retractable ramp system comprising:
a frame including longitudinal guide members;
a carriage extending laterally between and longitudinally moveable along the guide members;
a motor operable to move the carriage along the guide members;
a ramp having an inboard end pivotably coupled to the carriage for pivotal movement about a fulcrum, a center of gravity of the ramp positioned on an outboard side of the fulcrum, the ramp movable between stowed and deployed positions; and
a biasing assembly carried by the carriage and engaging the inboard end of the ramp on an inboard side of the fulcrum, the biasing assembly biasing the ramp to mitigate gravitational forces tending to pivot the ramp about the fulcrum.

56. (New) The retractable ramp system of claim 55, wherein the carriage includes a pair of pivot arms moveable along the guide members, each pivot arm defining a pivot point, the pivot points together defining the fulcrum.

57. (New) The retractable ramp system of claim 55, wherein the biasing assembly includes a laterally-extending torsion bar rotatably coupled to the carriage and positioned between the guide members, and a torsion spring carried by the torsion bar and including a first end that is fixed relative to the carriage and a second end that biases the inboard end of the ramp in a direction to mitigate gravitational forces tending to pivot the ramp about the fulcrum.

58. (New) The retractable ramp system of claim 57, wherein the biasing assembly includes an arm coupled to the torsion bar and engaging the inboard end of the ramp, the arm applying a biasing force to the inboard end of the ramp in a generally downward direction to mitigate gravitational forces tending to pivot the ramp about the fulcrum.

59. (New) The retractable ramp system of claim 58, wherein the carriage includes a pair of laterally-extending members that extend substantially parallel to the torsion bar, and wherein the first end of the torsion spring engages one of the laterally-extending members.

60. (New) The retractable ramp system of claim 55, wherein the biasing assembly reduces a magnitude of forces required to move the ramp platform between the stowed and deployed positions.

61. (New) A retractable ramp system for a vehicle having a floor, the retractable ramp system comprising:

a frame including longitudinal guide members;

a carriage extending laterally between and longitudinally moveable along the guide members;

a motor operable to move the carriage along the guide members;

a ramp pivotally coupled to the ramp carriage for movement therewith between stowed and deployed positions, the ramp including a substantially planar support surface and lips extending substantially orthogonally to the support surface and longitudinally along outer edges of the ramp, the support surface defining a cutout along an inboard end of the ramp; and

a ramp flap having an inboard end pivotally coupled adjacent to the floor and an outboard end, the outboard end including a plurality of rollers that ride along the support surface during movement of the ramp platform between the stowed and deployed position, and that fall off of the support surface and drop into the cutout when the ramp platform reaches the deployed position, wherein the ramp flap provides a transition surface for movement between the support surface and the vehicle floor.

62. (New) The retractable ramp system of claim 61, wherein the plurality of rollers includes a pair of outboard rollers and at least one inboard roller, wherein at least some of the rollers are coupled to the ramp flap by a substantially wedge-shaped bracket, and wherein during movement of the ramp platform from the deployed position toward the stowed position, the wedge-shaped brackets engage the ramp platform to urge the ramp flap upwardly and position the rollers for engagement with the support surface.

63. (New) The retractable ramp system of claim 62, wherein the ramp platform includes a pair of wear plates disposed on the support surface for engagement with the wedge-shaped brackets during movement of the ramp platform from the deployed position toward the stowed position.